Calendar No. 1045

99TH CONGRESS
2d Session

SENATE

REPORT
99-516

REPEALING PUBLIC LAW 87-186 RELATING TO THE NATIONAL ARMED FORCES MUSEUM ADVISORY BOARD OF THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

OCTOBER 2 (legislative day, SEPTEMBER 24), 1986.—Ordered to be printed

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Mr. MATHIAS, from the Committee on Rules and Administration, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany S. 2448]

The Committee on Rules and Administration, to which was referred the bill (S. 2448) to repeal Public Law 87-186 relating to the National Armed Forces Museum Advisory Board of the Smithsonian Institution, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon without amendment and recommends that the bill do pass.

PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The purpose of S. 2448 is to repeal Public Law 87-186, which established the National Armed Forces Museum Advisory Board of the Smithsonian Institution.

BACKGROUND

The National Armed Forces Museum Advisory Board of the Smithsonian Institution was established to provide advice and assistance to the Regents of the Smithsonian Institution on matters concerned with the portrayal of the contributions which the Armed Forces of the United States have made to American society and culture. The Board completed one of its primary functions, advising and assisting in the investigation of lands and buildings for the display of military collections in or near the District of Columbia, in 1974. In its report filed that year the Board concluded that no adequate site for such a museum was available. The Board has not been active since 1974.

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S. 2448 was introduced on May 14, 1986, by Senators Barry Goldwater of Arizona, Jake Garn of Utah, and Jim Sasser of Tennessee. Senators Goldwater, Garn, and Sasser are the Senate members of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution.

COMMITTEE ACTION

The committee received a letter from Dr. Robert McCormick Adams, Secretary, Smithsonian Institution, dated July 22, 1986, stating that the Armed Forces Museum Advisory Board had completed its work in 1974, that it had not been active since that time, that the other authority provided by the law is not necessary, and that the Office of Management and Budget had advised that there was no objection to this legislation from the standpoint of the Administration's program. Attached to the letter were pages from the 1985 edition of the *Official Museum Directory* listing 360 military, naval, and air and space museums in the United States that collect and exhibit aspects of military history.

On October 1, 1986, the Committee on Rules and Administration voted to favorably report S. 2448.

COMMITTEE FINDINGS

The Committee on Rules and Administration finds that the National Armed Forces Museum Advisory Board is no longer needed.

COST ESTIMATE

In accordance with paragraph 11(a) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee on Rules and Administration does not consider that enactment of S. 2448 would entail any cost to the Government.

REGULATORY IMPACT

In accordance with paragraph 11(b) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee on Rules and Administration does not consider that enactment of S. 2448 would have any regulatory impact.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

Enactment of S. 2448 would repeal Public Law 87-186 (Section 80 and sections 80a(a) through 80a(d) of title 20 of the United States Code).

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED

A letter from Dr. Robert McCormick Adams, Secretary, Smithsonian Institution, dated July 22, 1986, follows.

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION,
Washington, DC, July 22, 1986.

Hon. CHARLES MCC. MATHIAS,
Chairman, Committee on Rules and Administration,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I would like to take this opportunity to comment on S. 2448, a bill "to repeal Public Law 87-186 relating to the National Armed Forces Museum Advisory Board of the Smithsonian Institution." The bill was introduced on May 14, 1986 by Senator Goldwater for himself, Senator Garn, and Senator Sasser, all of whom are members of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution.

At its meeting on May 6, 1986, the Board of Regents reviewed a proposal for repeal of P.L. 87-186 and, after due consideration, asked its Congressional members to introduce and support appropriate legislation to that end. A companion measure, H.R. 4829, was introduced in the House of Representatives on May 15, 1986 by Mr. Boland for himself, Mr. Mineta, and Mr. Conte, who also serve on the Smithsonian's Board of Regents.

Enacted August 30, 1961, P.L 87-186 established the National Armed Forces Museum Advisory Board (NAFMAB) in the Smithsonian Institution. The Board was directed to "provide advice and assistance to the Regents [of the Smithsonian] . . . on matters concerned with the portrayal of the contributions which the Armed Forces of the United States have made to American society and culture." [Sec. 1(a)]

One of its primary functions was to advise and assist the Regents "to investigate and survey lands and buildings in and near the District of Columbia suitable for the display of military collections." [Sec. 3(a)] To aid in its investigation and survey of lands and buildings, the Advisory Board established criteria for use in consideration of potential sites. After studying fifteen such sites and embarking on several approaches to acquisition, the Advisory Board concluded that no completely adequate site was available for the major new museum contemplated by the Act.

As an alternative, the National Armed Forces Museum Advisory Board requested the Smithsonian to pursue discussions with the National Park Service on prospects for developing a cooperative outdoor museum program at Fort Washington in Prince Georges County, Maryland. An agreement for this purpose was entered into on September 20, 1973. However, its implementation was not possible because of problems of public access to Fort Washington, its limited facilities, and the costs that would have been associated with such a venture.

A report of these activities was transmitted by the Chairman of the National Armed Forces Museum Advisory Board to the Smithsonian's Board of Regents in December, 1974. On January 24, 1975 the Regents accepted the report and concurred in its finding. The report was submitted to the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House as required by Section 3(a) of P.L. 87-186 on January 29, 1975.

There has been no further activity since that time and, inasmuch as a major new museum of military history in the Washington area

is not feasible, it has been concluded that the Board established by P.L. 87-186 and the other authority that law provides are not necessary.

The 1985 edition of the *Official Museum Directory*, published by the American Association of Museums, lists 220 military museums, 102 maritime and naval museums and historic ships, and 38 aeronautics and space museums, all in the United States, that collect and exhibit aspects of military history. A list of those organizations is attached. Because of the museums that do exist and are related to military history, and because of the limits on its resources, the Smithsonian Institution has chosen to respond to public interest in the subject by treating it in the context of our historical, cultural, and technological development as a nation. At present the National Museum of American History has an active program of collecting and exhibiting material associated with the military history of the United States, and the collections of the National Air and Space Museum also include a number of significant objects in the area.

The Office of Management and Budget advises that there is no objection to this legislation from the standpoint of the Administration's program.

Sincerely,

ROBERT MCC. ADAMS, *Secretary.*

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